UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/169
S/1995/343
1 May 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Item 114 of the preliminary list*
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 27 April 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you concerning the Declaration on Violation of Human Rights and Freedoms of the Bosniac-Muslims in Sandžak and Other Parts of Serbia and Montenegro (A/50/138-S/1995/299, annex), transmitted to you by Mr. Sacirbey on 13 April 1995 and, upon the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to state the following.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia strongly rejects the accusations set out in the Declaration adopted by the Muslim Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning the alleged aggression by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on Bosnia and Herzegovina, violations of human rights and genocide.

The positions set out in the Declaration are fully in line with the well-known policy of the radical wing within the Muslim leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They fit the fundamentalist concept of the "Islamic Declaration" written by Mr. Alija Izetbegović in which he, inter alia, stated that there can be neither peace nor coexistence between the Islamic religion and non-Islamic social and political institutions. In view of the content and the practice envisaged in the "Islamic Declaration", it is clear that Izetbegović advocates the Islamization of all Muslims in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the creation of a radical Islamic State.

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That is essentially why the Bosnian Muslims refused the agreement on the cantonization of Bosnia and Herzegovina as presented by the former European Community mediator Ambassador José Cutileiro in 1992 and therefore why the radical Muslim leadership bears primary responsibility for the outbreak of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It has long been acknowledged that the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a case of "aggression of Serbia and Montenegro" but a civil war among the three constituent peoples. That has been stated, inter alia, by the President of the United States, William J. Clinton, the former French Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas, the former United States Secretary of State, James Baker, the former Co-Chairman of the International Conference on Yugoslavia, Lord Carrington, the former Italian Foreign Minister, Gianni de Michelis, and many others. Furthermore, it has been confirmed in the reports of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) that not a single soldier of the Army of Yugoslavia remained in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina after 19 May 1992.

Instead of expressing concern for the human rights violations in other States, the Muslim Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be more concerned with the status of human rights of Serbs, Croats and other non-Muslim members of the population within the territory under Muslim control in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those rights have been grossly violated in that the society as a whole has been subjected to Islamization.

Under the pretext of concern for the human rights situation of the Islamized population in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Muslim Parliament advocates the creation of a greater Muslim State in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In doing so, it deliberately ignores certain undisputed historical facts. Namely, in the past, the Ottoman Turk Empire encompassed not only the territories of three medieval Serb States (Zeta, Serbia and Bosnia) but also the territories of present-day Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece. The whole territory was divided in 365 administrative units (sandžaks). After liberation from Ottoman rule and the creation of independent States, such administrative units ceased to exist. Why would one of such units of the Ottoman empire - the so-called Novi Pazar Sandžak - be treated differently from the other 364? It cannot be claimed that in Raska (Sandžak) and parts of Montenegro live "Bosniacs" since those regions were never part of Bosnia. Such reasoning would imply that Bulgaria could lay claim to the Herzegovina sandžak, which during the Ottoman rule has been a part of the Rumelian vilayet, with a seat in Sofia. It is evident that the underlying cause for such positions by the Muslim Parliament is to infringe upon the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

It is well-known that in the territories of the former sandžaks the population that was Islamized was of non-Turkish origin. In all Balkan States that became independent after liberation from Ottoman rule, the Islamized population declared themselves to be nationals of those States with different religious affiliation.

The only exceptions in that regard were the Muslims in the former Yugoslav federal unit of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who were accorded the status of a nation by the regime of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At the same time, that regime considered the citizens of Islamic faith in other federal units as members of the nations who live in those units. It is obvious that the Muslim Parliament deems that religious affiliation automatically implies a separate nationality. As a consequence, all previous claims that Bosnia and Herzegovina is constituted as a civic State, are no longer valid. The term "Bosniacs" was first introduced by the administrator of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Benjamin Kalaj, during the Austro-Hungarian occupation of the country to indicate all the population in Bosnia regardless of their nationality. Presently, the Muslim Parliament is attempting to extend the use of the term to population outside Bosnia. True enough, the use of the term "Bosniacs" is "limited" only to the Islamized population in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. For obvious reasons it fails to mention the Islamized population in other Balkan States.

It should be reiterated that there are no "Bosniacs" in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Therefore, there can be no parallels between the Islamized population in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Serbian people, which enjoyed the status of a constituent nation in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Consequently, it is unacceptable to condition the possibility of establishment of confederal ties between the Republic of Srpska and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with that between the Islamized population in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian Muslims.

As for mutual recognition, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia seeks no recognition from the Bosnian Muslim Government, nor can it recognize that Government prior to the resolution of the Bosnian crisis, which presupposes the agreement of the three constituent peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina on a footing of equality.

The charges in the Declaration on the alleged human rights violations represent a part of an orchestrated campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in which some other neighbour countries are also involved. The Muslim Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is hardly eligible to evaluate the human rights situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to invite other States to do the same. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its two federal units are constituted as civic and parliamentary States in which all citizens, regardless of their nationality, ethnic origin or religion, have been guaranteed all human rights in accordance with international law. Even given the unprecedented media campaign and the unjust sanctions against it, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has managed to ensure a high level of respect for, and protection of, human rights. In that context, all religions, including Islam, are accorded equal treatment.

The Muslim Parliament, on the other hand, deliberately ignores that a part of the Islamized population from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, guided by the fundamentalist ideas and encouraged by the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), has engaged in the war operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the side of the Muslim Government. They openly advocate forcible secession of Raska (Sandžak)

from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and even do not hesitate to resort to terrorism. As a result of that situation, the measures taken by the competent authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia against the perpetrators of such criminal acts cannot be portrayed as violations of human rights.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 114 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.